



Department of Utilities, Codes Academy team up against water theft

It's a Class 1 misdemeanor to steal drinking water from the City of Norfolk. The punishment is up to \$2,500.00 fine or up to 12 months in jail, or both.

Despite the punishment, people take water without paying for it through devices called straight connections, and Norfolk Utilities meter mechanics report an average of seven of them a week.

Police, fire investigation and codes officials in Norfolk have the authority to write a summons for this misdemeanor. Twenty-five such summonses were issued in 2002, and 10 have been issued so far in 2003.

Water theft is not exclusively a Norfolk problem. It happens in cities throughout Hampton Roads, as well as the rest of the country. So, the Environmental Codes Enforcement Academy, which is attended by enforcement and codes officials from neighboring cities, invited the Department of Utilities to conduct a session on how the City of Norfolk handles it.

In January, Debra Shelton, Accounting Technician with the Division of Water Distribution, conducted the class. Debra had taken the Basic City Environmental Codes Academy class in

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Department of Utilities employee **Debra Shelton** shows a type of straight connection to the Environmental Codes Academy class.

Utilities wins four Communicator Awards

Every year *The Communicator Awards*, an international awards competition, recognizes outstanding work in different areas of the communications field. The following Department of Utilities programs and projects received awards in the 2003 Communicator Awards Print Media category:

- **Fight the Fat in Norfolk's Sewers**—Crystal Award of Excellence, Marketing/Promotion Campaign;

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Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study (SSES) update

In July 2001, Norfolk began the Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study (SSES), a comprehensive evaluation of the city's sewer system. The main purpose of the SSES is to quantify the system's issues and deficiencies, prioritize the repair efforts, and ensure efficient and effective use of available Wastewater funds.

The SSES included many tests and studies to:

- Measure the amount of sewage flow in the system and the impact of rain and groundwater on that flow;
- Evaluate the physical condition of different types and ages of pipes, and
- Determine the major causes

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March 2001, but this was the first time she had been in the instructor/presenter role.

"Normally I have no problem speaking in front of people," said Debra, "but there were so many building officials there. I was afraid I would step out of my element."

But, straight connections are Debra's element.

"My purpose was to educate them about the differences between legal and illegal water hook-ups," she explained.

Through a PowerPoint presentation, Debra illustrated signs of an illegal water hook-up—water running down the street, a hose running from a meter box, or a hose hooked up to a fire hydrant. She then outlined the procedures Norfolk follows.

When the official sees a straight connection, he or she must notify the Environmental Crimes Task Force. After observing the violation, the Task Force issues the summons, and the violator must go to court. The Department of Utilities is then notified so that the straight connection can be removed.

The class was made up of about 45 police, fire inspectors and building code officials from Chesapeake, Virginia Beach and Portsmouth.

"We have worked with the Environmental Crimes Task Force on straight connections for a long time," said Nikki Riddick, Customer Service Manager, "and the partnership has worked well for Norfolk. Debra's presentation to the Academy is helping to widen the circle of officials that can help stop water theft." ♦

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- **At Your Service, 24-7**, - Award of Distinction, Overall Website;
- **Meeting the Challenges, 24-7**—Award of Distinction, Annual Report/Government;
- **The Department of Utilities New Employee Orientation Manual**, Honorable Mention, Employee Publication/Manual/Training.

Norfolk's winners emerged from 3,730 entries from throughout the United States and several foreign countries. Of those entries, 12% were Crystal Award of Excellence winners, 19% were Award of Distinction winners and 10% were Honorable Mention winners.

The Print Media competition is judged by industry professionals whose judging designates the winners as exceeding a high standard of excellence and serving as a benchmark for the industry. ♦

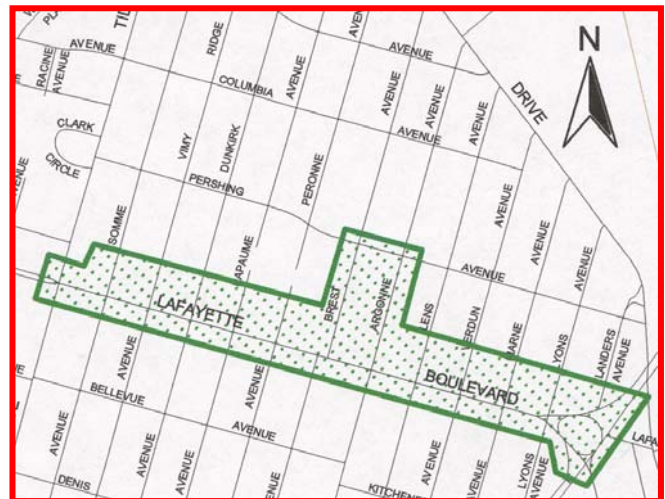
Utilities CIP Update

Fairmount Park

The City of Norfolk is continuing to make major improvements to water and sewer services and infrastructure in Fairmount Park.

T.A. Sheets Mechanical General Contractors, Inc. of Norfolk is scheduled to begin construction this spring on the Lafayette Boulevard section of the Fairmount Park Sewer Replacement/Rehabilitation project.

This phase of the multi-stage project will replace or rehabilitate water and sewer lines along Lafayette Boulevard from Tidewater Drive to Chesapeake Boulevard. ♦



Lafayette Boulevard, from Tidewater Drive to Chesapeake Boulevard (marked in green), will be the site of this phase of the Fairmount Park project.

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of sewer overflows and propose solutions.

The data collected allowed the sewers to be modeled on a computer. Computer modeling will help the city predict which infrastructure improvements will be the most cost-effective.

The final report will be presented to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on August 1, 2003. After review and approval by DEQ, this report will become the roadmap for bringing the sewer system up to date and setting the course for our operations and maintenance plans. ♦